MONTHLY BULLETIN
PENNSYLVANIA·DEPARTMENT·OF·WELFARE

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A PUBLIC SERVANT LAYS DOWN HER WORK

By Helen Glenn Tyson, Assistant Deputy Secretary of Welfare

ON February 7th, the death of Martha J. Megee ended her long service to Pennsylvania. She died as she would have chosen to die—after a brief illness, deeply involved in the problems the Department of Welfare is facing, in the thick of the battle against human misery.

Thirty-two years is a long period of service in any profession. With Mrs. Megee, it began with the days when she was made District Superintendent of the Kensington District of the Pennsylvania Society for Organizing Charity. This was the first district office organized under the leadership of Mary Richmond, Executive Secretary of the Society. Young workers who are burdened with heavy "caseloads" today, might study with profit the history of those early days of the pioneers in that field. Street car service had not been extended to many parts of the city; the nearest telephone was a block away; all records were written longhand in duplicate. Into that depressed district Mrs. Megee carried the gospel, new in welfare work, that "people are different;" that the personality of the humblest must be respected; that human beings in trouble can be really cared for only when their own longings and aspirations are regarded. After nine years' service with the Society—today the Family Society of Philadelphia—Mrs. Megee was appointed Director of the Social Service Department of the Pennsylvania Hospital. Under her leadership—again in a pioneer field—the Department developed a service for the sick, worthy of the distinguished medical institution it served.

When war broke, Mrs. Megee entered the Red Cross, first as Associate Director of Civilian Relief of the Pennsylvania-Delaware Division; later in charge of plans for after-care of disabled soldiers, working them out with the Veterans' Bureau, Red Cross Chapters, etc.

From the Red Cross, Mrs. Megee went to the Children's Aid Society of Pennsylvania in 1920, serving as Assistant Secretary in charge of the case work of the Society.

When Dr. Ellen Potter, Secretary of Welfare from 1923 to 1927, began to look for someone to carry new methods of care along the age-old paths of poor relief, she turned to Mrs. Megee. For two years Mrs. Megee served as Social Service Consultant in the Department; then in July, 1923, was appointed Director of the Bureau of Assistance. The Bureau presents widely varied types of activities. Mrs. Megee's broad background of experience in family work, children's work, hospital work, and service to soldiers, equipped her to play an active part in fields in which most specialized workers might have failed.

In the hospital field, her main achievement was setting up the "credit system" under a new law for 161 state-aided hospitals—a system in brief, in which state aid is granted to hospitals according to the actual number of free days' care given to patients. Those of us who remember the old "log rolling" days, when state money was handed to hospitals in lump sums, with little consideration of the amount of actual service they were rendering the sick poor, will realize what a long step ahead Pennsylvania has taken in the last decade. The cordial cooperation of hospital authorities, their appreciation of her understanding and advice, were a constant source of satisfaction to Mrs. Megee.

Almshouses are dreary places, for the most part, and inspection of almshouses can become a dry-as-dust routine. To Mrs. Megee they were places of which a county—all the residents of a county—could be proud or ashamed. Always she saw them—not alone in terms of sanitary plumbing, floor space, or adequate food, but as the last resort of the old, the feeble, the chronically ill. Their value lay in the kind of life they offered to the people of Pennsylvania who had come to the end of their own resources, and as public charges were obliged to take what the public gave. Old people, disabled, crippled inmates all over the state regarded her as a personal friend, interested in knowing whether their beds were comfortable, their food clean; interested in knowing why they had come "to the end of the road;" and in what might be done to make the rest of life more satisfying.

It is probably true that some one trait especially endears each one of us to our friends. In Mrs. Megee, it was moral indignation; a constant flame of righteous anger that apathy and indifference still paralyze so many lines of our public welfare work. During her ten years of service, she had constantly preached that counties need,

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THE STATE WELFARE COMMISSION

At the regular monthly meeting on February 17, 1933, approved the following resolution: "Resolved: That the Commission expresses its deep regret at the death of Mrs. Martha J. Megee, Director of the Bureau of Assistance, on February 6, 1933, and that it records its appreciation of her great service to Pennsylvania during her nine years of association with the Department of Welfare. Her devotion and sincerity of purpose was outstanding. The character of her work in the fields of supervision of hospitals and almshouses, poor relief and allied services, has set a standard of achievement that is unique".

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EDITORIAL

By Alice F. Liveright, Secretary of Welfare

FALSE economy, laxity, deterioration go hand in hand.

Tragic the State that has never established social welfare standards—more tragic the State which after successful efforts to establish a supervised welfare program now finds itself shorn of its opportunity for protective service.

Social welfare cannot be measured, weighed nor tabulated. The maladjusted, the insane, the criminals who *never* develop because "prevention" stepped in to save them cannot be enumerated.

The rising tide of State care would engulf us did we not control social dependency at its sources. It is not false economy for the Welfare Department to present a budget for 1933-35 which is $13,641,425 less than the budget for 1931-33 (though the exclusion of several millions for construction of State-owned institutions is to be deeply regretted). This reduction was carefully planned by the Governor, Budget Secretary and the Welfare Department.

Blind, thoughtless cuts in service such as those suggested by House Bill No. 22 are devastating. They indicate scant knowledge of a sound welfare program. House Bill No. 22 would abolish established services which have become standard practice in most States as well as in the Federal program.

State funds for State-aided hospitals amounting to $7,151,500 as well as $625,000 for State-aided homes would be left unprotected. Protection of 50,000 children in Pennsylvania institutions would be withdrawn. The compilation of statistics uniform with those of nation-wide agencies covering children, prisoners, insane would cease. The aged would be subjected to the whim of varying local programs. Pennsylvania the second richest state in the Union would fall out of line with our other states. We should be sliding back into the illiterate do-nothingism of the Middle Ages.

Economize—yes, till it hurts. But no intelligent Pennsylvania citizen wants us to save beyond the point of his own safety nor at the expense of our helpless ones.

NOTE—Our readers who plan to send in for copies of the Sixth Biennial Report of the Secretary of Welfare, with the accompanying supplement, are requested to send cash, money orders or checks payable to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, to the Division of Documents. Stamps will not be accepted.

A PUBLIC SERVANT

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not poor farms, but hospitals for the chronically ill; that almost half of the people in almshouses need medical and nursing care; that another large group, perhaps a fifth, are barely able to look after their own personal needs in the way of dressing and feeding themselves; and that the old idea of "putting the pauper to work" was cruel and obsolete. Under her leadership 31 of the almshouses in the state have developed hospital departments for the aged and chronically ill. Her greatest hope was that some day Pennsylvania would follow New York and other progressive states in establishing some form of old age security for its worn out workers, whereby they could spend their last days in peace, unshamed by the threat of hunger or of "going on the county." In her last report she states, "Poor relief is not adequate. Many aged persons could be comfortably cared for in their own or relatives' homes with the aid of old age assistance allowances."

Mrs. Megee had nothing of the public official in her make up. She hated form letters, almost a necessity in her heavy correspondence; for—"How would *you* like to write to a State Department about your troubles and get a form letter in reply?" Urgent appeals for help that poured in by the thousands before the state had established a system for unemployment relief were a never ending source of anxious concern.

There is no space in which to discuss Mrs. Megee's work under the "Solicitation of Funds" Act; in the field of outdoor relief; in the licensing of private homes and hospitals. Even her case correspondence gave a cross section of conditions all over the state, and every letter was carefully studied and answered.

All over the nation the burden of unemployment is swinging progressive thought into the field of public welfare. Somehow the standards, the ethics, the point of view of private social work must be interpreted and strengthened in that field. The integrity and high purpose of a public servant like Mrs. Megee must surely count in this transition period. A former staff member of the Department, on hearing of her death, wrote in part: "What a gay place heaven is today with so many old and forlorn people—no longer old and forlorn—out to greet her and tell her that a little of the brighter outlook began in Pennsylvania because she had lived there too. * * * No one will have a heavy heart because of inadequate relief. * * * Wouldn't it be great if some outstanding progressive step in poor relief could be taken as a real memorial to her? Well, much of the advance that may be achieved in the future *will* be that."

Miss Florence Peters, of North East, Erie County, has joined the staff of the Department of Welfare as supervising nutritionist. She will advise with the management of the State-owned institutions under the Department to insure a well balanced diet for the inmates at the least expense. Miss Peters was graduated from Columbia University with a bachelor degree in Foods and Nutrition. Following two years as instructor in home economics in high schools, she became dietitian at Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, leaving this institution after six years' service to enter her new work with the Department of Welfare.

TO GUARD THE CHILDREN

HARRISBURG is accustomed to political celebrities. But it was fluttered by a recent visit from the wife of our new President, Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt. She came to speak before the Malnutrition Conference called by Mrs. Pinchot.

This conference on behalf of undernourished children met in the Grace Methodist Church. It is an old fashioned building with broad balconies encircling three walls. Gaunt tiers of choir seats rise behind the preacher's platform. The light sifts in through colored windows and the dark woodwork is carved with the rosettes and flourishes of an earlier day.

The church filled early. Facing the audience sat three women, representative of all that is modern and progressive. They made an effective contrast to their Victorian setting. In the center, in a tall oak chair sat Mrs. Roosevelt, slender, alert and dignified. Beside her sat Mrs. Pinchot, a spot of flashing color in the dim religious shadows with her vivid hair and a costume of glittering gold stuff banded with fur. On Mrs. Roosevelt's other side sat Mrs. Alice F. Liveright, Secretary of Welfare.

The Governor was there to do the honors. The Lieutenant Governor acted as chairman of the meeting. The President of the State Medical Society made the opening speech. In spite of their eminence, the men served as background. For this was a woman's meeting. The church was filled with women, leaders of community life from every section of the state. They had gathered in response to the call of their Governor's wife to deal with the problem that has been woman's special charge from time immemorial, the welfare of their children.

Quietly, almost casually the Department of Welfare staged a spectacle before those assembled women that shared something of the moving epic quality of old morality plays. Limiting herself to an introductory speech, Mrs. Liveright announced that she would turn the rest of her hour over to representatives of children's welfare work throughout the state who would make two minute reports on the condition of children in their districts. With characteristic precision an assistant on the sidelines held a stop watch on the speakers and warned them with a muffled bell.

One by one, as Mrs. Liveright called, women scattered throughout the audience came forward to the platform, light and dark, slender and plump, in tailored tweeds and furs, with smiling assurance or angular earnestness. There was no time for platitudes. They gave concrete facts, a few figures, showed impressive familiarity with conditions, referred back to experience as volunteer workers in their districts of ten, fifteen, twenty years. They represented every corner of the state, crowded cities, mining villages, ex-industrial centers, scattered farms, remote mountain hamlets.

They ignored the opportunity to wring their hearers' hearts with sob stuff. They spoke constructively, expertly of preventive work now in hand, of how much worse conditions would be without it, of how essential it was to maintain and expand such service.

Against this background, a state-wide tapestry of earnest, trained women, Mrs. Roosevelt made a stirring appeal for more volunteers to carry forward and to extend the work already begun.

As a result of the meeting, Dr. Samuel McClintock Hamill, President of the American Academy of Pediatrics, has been appointed chairman of a State Malnutrition Committee which carries the enthusiastic support of the State Medical Society. The committee will cooperate with women and medical groups throughout the State to prevent the children of Pennsylvania from suffering permanent injuries from the depression. In launching this program Pennsylvania takes leadership among all the states in protection of its younger generation.

THE BUILDING PROGRAM

By Margaret C. Madeira, State Welfare Commissioner

AT the regular session of 1931, the Legislature after careful study, appropriated over $10,000,000 for the promotion of the Welfare Building Program. Unfortunately for those who would have labored on the building projects, unfortunately for those who are confined in our state institutions and for those who must turn to them for help, the appropriations for this program were reduced by over $4,500,000 at the second special session. Let us consider some of the needs that the last appropriations were intended to meet.

Two more buildings for inmates were to have been provided at Pennhurst, where the waiting list carries the names of 896 children (December 1, 1932). Four more buildings for girls were to have been provided at Laurelton, where the waiting list carries the names of 606 feebleminded girls. Many of these waiting-list cases constitute a heavy charge upon the local communities. Two more buildings for boys were to have been provided at Morganza, which is now 30.6% overcrowded. Third floor dormitories, crowded with double-decker beds, in old and inflammable buildings, occupied by delinquent boys —that is the risk that we must continue to run. Two more buildings for epileptics were to have been provided at Selinsgrove, and in one of these there would have been accommodations for women—there are none now. Two pavilions for tuberculous patients at Harrisburg; a central kitchen and dining room at Torrance; a congregate dining room at Warren, which would have added 200 needed beds to the capacity; a hospital wing at the Western Penitentiary to replace a condemned building; the completion of the cell block at Rockview—these are among the projects sacrificed.

In these days of declining revenues and declining costs it is our policy to seek the fulfillment of the spirit of the obligation of the State rather than the letter. The building program is being built from the needs up, and not from the expected $10,000,000 down. We believe that the projects mentioned are real needs, and we hope that the present Legislature will provide for them.

As to new projects, the most essential center around the relief of Byberry, the Philadelphia Hospital for Mental Diseases. The expansion of Norristown to take a substantial number of new commitments from Philadelphia, together with the reconstruction of dangerously deteriorated buildings, sufficient expansion of Pennhurst to enable this institution to take the feebleminded children from Byberry—these are the first steps to correct a situation that demands immediate action. The further development of Torrance, the continuation of construction at Graterford, the beginning of the State Psychiatric Hospital are other projects which deserve consideration even in these times. The Citizens' Committee has classified the various projects into four groups according to their urgency, and we estimate that in order to take care of the A group, which by no means includes all the above projects, we will need about $4,250,000. This is a modest request in view of what was lost last summer and of the basis on which the Welfare Bond Issue was defeated.

OUR WELFARE DEPARTMENT

From an Address by Arthur Dunham, Secretary, Child Welfare Division, Public Charities Association of Pennsylvania, at Wilkes-Barre

"PENNSYLVANIA has made two major contributions to the field of public welfare—one, the service developed by its Mothers' Assistance Fund; the other, its State Department of Welfare. In the twelve years that have passed since its establishment, the Pennsylvania Department of Welfare has become one of the five or six outstanding state welfare departments in the United States.

"The Department has seen the social needs of the State as a whole. Along with its care for the State wards, in institutions for the mentally ill, feebleminded and others, the Department has brought a service of friendly and discerning advice, visitation and help to the many private welfare organizations of the State. It has proceeded not by coercion but by persuasion and education. Under its leadership, the welfare agencies and institutions of Pennsylvania have developed appreciably higher standards of efficiency and have learned to serve more effectively those who needed their help.

"Social work in Pennsylvania cannot keep house without the State Department of Welfare. The Department is worth fighting for. Few issues in the whole realm of social welfare will command so instant and wholehearted a rallying of the humanitarian and civic forces of the Commonwealth as the need to preserve and defend this State Department. Its ministrations have helped those who could not help themselves and have made the lives of thousands of men and women and little children happier, fuller and more worth living."

GARDENS

GARDENS for three quarters of the 400,000 families on relief in this State is the goal which the State Emergency Relief Board has set for the season.

The work is being organized by counties. Anyone interested should apply for information to his county relief board. A County Garden Committee has been appointed which includes the Farm agent in each county. The committee plans to secure the land rent free and the Board has agreed that an amount up to $2.50 per family (relief families only) will be available for seeds, fertilizer and gardening tools.

Last year Allegheny and Lehigh Counties made a great success of their gardens and their plans have been studied in laying out this year's work. A large percentage of the counties have already been organized for the coming summer and more are reporting every day. In the autumn an Honor Roll in the S. E. R. B. offices in Harrisburg will show all counties which succeeded in enrolling three quarters of their relief families for this work.

Members of the advisory group appointed by the S. E. R. B. are: M. S. McDowell, Director of Extension in Agriculture and Home Economics; R. Bruce Dunlap, Agriculturist, Department of Welfare; Miles Horst, Secretary of the Council of State Agricultural Organizations; Miss Elizabeth McCalmont, of Warren; W. S. Hagar, Deputy Secretary, Department of Agriculture, R. H. Wheeler, chairman of the County Relief Board of Lehigh County, and N. P. Witherow, head of the garden program of Allegheny County.

CONFERENCE JOTTINGS

ALTHOUGH they endorse the eight hour day for industry, Pennsylvania social workers put in 14 and 15 hours daily during their recent annual conference in Wilkes-Barre.

Miss M. Alice Hill, of the Harrisburg Associated Aid Societies, was elected president of the next Conference and Mrs. Maude B. Coleman, Interracial Consultant of the Department of Welfare, was elected to the executive committee.

More than 425 men and women registered, an excellent attendance in view of hard times and retrenchments. Registration began on Wednesday morning, February 22, in the lobby of the Sterling Hotel. At the formal opening session in the evening the speakers were the Rev. H. J. Gilbert, of Pittsburgh, president of the Conference, and John A. Lapp, of Chicago, former president.

Delegates chose between three subjects for their 8 o'clock breakfast on the following morning: Mothers' Assistance under the chairmanship of Arthur Dunham; a conference on Transients led by Miss Ella M. Weinfurther, of the National Association of Travelers' Aid, and a meeting of the State Family Welfare Association.

Again at noon, after a Forum and series of special conferences there were three luncheons on the program. The Public Charities Association sponsored the luncheon in the main dining room with Mrs. William A. Jaquette presiding. Arthur Dunham spoke on "Current Trends in Child Welfare in Pennsylvania," and Dr. C. C. Carstens, of New York, spoke of trends throughout the United States. A brief extract from Mr. Dunham's stirring speech is printed elsewhere.

A dozen Round Tables were organized for the afternoon, followed by business meetings of the seven Conference divisions: family welfare, child welfare, institutions, probation and parole, health, church and community organization.

Speakers at the dinner in the ballroom Thursday evening were particularly impressive. Miss Joanna C. Colcord, of the Russell Sage Foundation, described Self Help programs as they have evolved all over the country and especially in Washington, California, Utah and Ohio. Mr. Kenneth L. M. Pray, of Philadelphia, spoke of "Federal and State Relief Programs." The remainder of the evening was turned over to the Wilkes-Barre Social Workers' Club. They presented several amusing dramatic sketches, and a Swedish chorus of men and women in gay native costume sang.

Friday offered a similarly crowded schedule and the day ended with two dinners, one on Administration of Emergency Relief and one sponsored by The Bureau of Children of the Department of Welfare. At the latter dinner, Mrs. Alice F. Liveright spoke on the relation of the Bureau to child agencies throughout the state, and Miss Margaret Moss, of Morganza, spoke on "Work for Children at Home and Abroad."

Other members and associates of the Welfare Department whose names appeared on the Conference program are: J. Prentice Murphy, Mrs. Helen Glenn Tyson, F. Richard Stilwell, John R. Cranor, Dr. Augusta E. Galster and Miss Charlotte Parrish.

Saturday morning's Forum was turned over to the Department of Labor and Industry with Miss Charlotte E. Carr presiding. And Saturday afternoon, a trifle dizzy from four days of concentrated information, the delegates made their farewells and dispersed.

GETTYSBURG COLLEGE
Gettysburg, Pa.